

IN THE CLAIMS

Applicants do not amend, cancel, or offer new claims in this response to the Office Action.

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 and 35-103 are pending in the application.

Claims 36-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,970,479 to Shepherd ("Shepherd").

Claims 1-31, 35, and 39-103 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shepherd in view of the purported and unsubstantiated knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art.

There is an indication in the Office Action concerning the drawings. However, there is no indication whether the drawings filed on August 6, 2001 are accepted or rejected. Applicants request clarification concerning the drawings.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections and request allowance of claims 1-31 and 35-103 in light of the following remarks.

INTRODUCTION

Applicants' counsel request and look forward to a telephonic Examiner Interview to address the following issues in order to put the application in condition for allowance:

I. No element of independent claim 36 is found, either expressly or inherently, in Shepherd. Applicants' claims 37 and 38 were previously dependent claims, and incorporate each and every element of claim 36; thus claims 37 and 38 are also patentable over Shepherd.

II. Claims 2, 4-5, 11-13, 15, 17-23, 27, 29-31, 35, 39-96, and 99 are improperly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Shepherd in view of purported and unsubstantiated knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art. Side-stepping the requirements of MPEP §2143.03 for all claim limitations to be taught or suggested by the prior art, the Examiner appears to rely on personal opinion or experience to constitute the prior art. Respectfully, such reliance on personal knowledge by the Examiner is improper and the rejections should be withdrawn.